



United States Diplomatic Mission to Nigeria, Public Affairs Section
Plot 1075, Diplomatic Drive, Central Business District, Abuja
Telephone: 09-461-4000. Website at <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov>

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

March 23, 2015

PR-013/2015

President Obama's Message to the Nigerian People

View video here: <http://wh.gov/iWP3O>

BEGIN TEXT

Hello. Today, I want to speak directly to you—the people of Nigeria.

Nigeria is a great nation and you can be proud of the progress you've made. Together, you won your independence, emerged from military rule, and strengthened democratic institutions. You've strived to overcome division and to turn Nigeria's diversity into a source of strength. You've worked hard to improve the lives of your families and to build the largest economy in Africa.

Now you have a historic opportunity to help write the next chapter of Nigeria's progress—by voting in the upcoming elections. For elections to be credible, they must be free, fair and peaceful. *All* Nigerians must be able to cast their votes without intimidation or fear.

So I call on all leaders and candidates to make it clear to their supporters that violence has no place in democratic elections—and that they will not incite, support or engage in any kind of violence—before, during, or after the votes are counted. I call on all Nigerians to peacefully express your views and to reject the voices of those who call for violence. And when elections are free and fair, it is the responsibility of *all* citizens to help keep the peace, no matter who wins.

Successful elections and democratic progress will help Nigeria meet the urgent challenges you face today. Boko Haram—a brutal terrorist group that kills innocent men, women and children—must be stopped. Hundreds of kidnapped children deserve to be returned to their families. Nigerians who have been forced to flee deserve to return to their homes. Boko Haram wants to destroy Nigeria and all that you have worked to build. By casting your ballot, you can help secure your nation's progress.

I'm told that there is a saying in your country: "to keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done." Today, I urge all Nigerians—from all religions, all ethnic groups, and all regions—to come together and keep Nigeria one. And in this task of advancing the security, prosperity, and human rights of all Nigerians, you will continue to have a friend and partner in the United States of America.

END TEXT

#

Relevant information about U.S. policies and programs in Nigeria can be found on our websites:
<http://nigeria.usembassy.gov> and www.usaid.gov/ng

